Archie COMICS

4

OF FOUR

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE™

IT'S THE HEROIC

MR. JUSTICE VERSUS THE VILE KID WICKED!

IT ALL ENDS HERE!

HOWARD • SABBATINI • WHITMORE • MORELLI

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE™

THE STORY SO FAR...

Before Archie Andrews became the super-heroic Mr. Justice, he was just a normal kid with normal friends, like Jughead Jones and Reggie Mantle. But where Jughead served as Archie's bestie and confidant, Reggie became Archie's closest rival. That rivalry unfortunately spawned into a vile jealousy for young Reggie. Coupled with his already rocky relationship with his father, the head of the *Riverdale Gazette*, Ricky Mantle, Reggie's mental state is nearing its breaking point...

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Once upon a time...

There once was a boy named

How do you write the story of where life goes wrong?

Do you start with happier times?

Show the good before the bad?

Before the best of friends became the worst of enemies?

Archie Andrews was the best friend anyone could hope to have.

And far better than many deserved.

ICE CREA

But some people couldn't recognize a good friend to save their life...

And so, they fall in with a bad crowd.

STUPID LITTLE GINGER SNOT, THINKS HE'S SO MUCH BETTER THAN ME!

HEY, REGGIE, THINK *FAST!*

WHAT'S UP, ED?

IT'S "*FANGS*," MANTLE! *FANGS FOGARTY*, AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! *FANGS* IT IS!

NOW... WHAT'S UP?

Ah, FORGET IT. I FORGOT, YOU AND ANDREWS ARE SUCH GOOD PALS.

WE *USED* TO BE.

BACK IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ANYWAY. I'M TOO COOL FOR HIM NOW.

I HEARD IT'S CUZ YOU WERE JEALOUS THAT YOUR DAD LIKED HIM BETTER THAN YOU.

Pfft...AS IF I WANTED SOME LAME JOB, DELIVERING NEWSPAPERS AT THE CRACK OF DAWN, ANYWAY!

WELL, WELL, LOOK AT YOU! STILL SO SENSITIVE. MEANWHILE, ARCHIE'S MOVED ON JUST FINE...

THAT'S NOT--

Oh, NO? THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SITTING ALL ALONE, AND ANDREWS IS YUKKIN' IT UP WITHOUT YA'.

YOU'RE YESTERDAY'S NEWS, MANTLE.

REPLACED BY THE NEW KID...

Envy is an ugly thing. There's a reason why they call it a monster.

NOW, I WANT EVERYONE ON THEIR ***BEST BEHAVIOR!***

WE ARE GOING TO SEE SOME REALLY INCREDIBLE, BUT POSSIBLY ***DANGEROUS***, EXPERIMENTS!

SO, STAY CLOSE TO YOUR SAFETY-BUDDY AT ALL TIMES!

RIVERDALE SCIENCE MUSEUM

WELCOME RIVERDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL

THE WONDERS OF QUANTUM ENERGY

SPONSORED BY LODGE INDUSTRIES

SCHOOL BUS

STOP

MAN, Oh MAN, MANTLE! THIS IS GONNA BE A ***BLAST!***

GET IT? A ***BLAST?***

YEAH, I GET IT.

AND YOU'RE SURE THIS FIRECRACKER ISN'T GONNA ***HURT*** ANY-ONE?

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? YOU LIGHT THE FUSE, TOSS IT, IT GOES ***BANG***, BUT THAT'S IT!

BESIDES... THERE'S A ***SOUTH SIDE SERPENTS*** T-SHIRT WITH YOUR NAME ON IT, IF YOU PULL THIS OFF.

THIS DEVICE RIGHT HERE IS CALLED A ***QUANTUM REACTOR***. NOW, I KNOW, THAT SOUNDS VERY "*SCIENCE-Y*," BUT THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THIS...

IMAGINE YOU HAD A VERY ***SPECIAL*** BATTERY. WHAT IF EVERY TIME YOU ***USED*** THAT BATTERY, IT SIMULTANEOUSLY ***CHARGED*** THE BATTERY?

NEWTON'S LAW OF ENERGY CONSERVATION TELLS US THAT THIS SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE--

--BUT THANKS TO ADVANCES IN THE FIELD OF QUANTUM PHYSICS...

FSSS

THIS SEEMS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY! CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THAT GEEK IN THE LAB COAT'S FACE WHEN THIS BAD BOY GOES OFF!

NOW, THE LOCALIZED ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELD WILL KEEP THE ENERGY SAFELY CONTAINED, BUT EVEN SO, EVERYONE NEEDS TO WEAR THEIR SAFETY GOGGLES AND MAKE SURE TO KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!

MY THOUGHTS ***EXACTLY!***

ALL RIGHT, LET'S FIRE HER UP!

Sometimes, when faced with a choice, we find making it to be the most impossible thing in the world.

C'MON, REGGIE! WHAT'RE YA' DOIN'?! YOU'RE GONNA BLOW YOUR ***HAND*** OFF!

WHAT?! YOU SAID IT WOULD JUST MAKE A LOUD BANG!

FSSS

JUST ***CHUCK IT***, DUDE! ***HURRY!***

Until finally, panic forces our hand.

MISTER, WATCH OUT!

NO! GET BACK! THE MAGNETIC FIELD--

AAAGH!!

ARCHIE!

NO!

GOOD LORD, SON, ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M...I'M OKAY.

AT LEAST, I FEEL OKAY.

IT WAS ALL REGGIE'S IDEA!

"I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!"

YOU'RE LUCKY DR. PATEL GAVE YOU THE ALL-CLEAR!

AND EVEN ***LUCKIER*** THAT HE SAID THE SAME ABOUT ARCHIE!

I KNOW...

HE WAS TRYING TO HELP PEOPLE! PEOPLE ***YOU*** COULD HAVE ***SERIOUSLY*** HURT!

I SAID I KNOW...

WELL, THERE'S ONE THING ***I*** KNOW. THAT'S THE ***LAST*** YOU'RE EVER GOING TO BE HANGING OUT WITH EDWARD FOGARTY!

I HAD TO ***BEG*** THE PRINCIPAL NOT TO EXPEL YOU! YOU AND YOUR OL' BUDDY ***FANGS*** WON'T BE SO LUCKY NEXT TIME.

HE'S NOT...

≥Sniffle≤ HE'S NOT MY "BUDDY."

≥Sigh≤

REGGIE...

I KNOW THINGS HAVE BEEN TOUGH. I'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF WORKING, AND I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO BE THERE FOR YOU, AND OLIVER, AND MOM. BUT ONCE I GET THIS PROMOTION, AND I'M ***RUNNING*** THE ***RIVERDALE GAZETTE***, I'LL HAVE A MUCH LIGHTER SCHEDULE. BUT LISTEN...

FEELING ALONE DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO THROW IN WITH THE FIRST PERSON WHO GIVES YOU ATTENTION. YOU'RE A GOOD KID--AND I DON'T WANT ANYONE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOU AND LEADING YOU DOWN A BAD PATH.

JUST...***PROMISE*** ME THAT NO MATTER WHAT... YOU'LL FOLLOW WHAT YOUR HEART TELLS YOU. NOT WHAT SOMEONE ***ELSE*** TELLS YOU.

OKAY, DAD... I PROMISE.

And so the years went by...

TOUCHDOWN! AND WITH THAT, RIVERDALE IS TAKING ALL-COUNTY!

THAT'S ANOTHER TWENTY-YARD RUN FOR THE BULLDOGS' STAR RUNNING BACK, REGGIE MANTLE!

WE DID IT!

WE'RE ALL-COUNTY CHAMPS!

PHENOMENAL WORK OUT THERE, MANTLE! THAT'S ***ANOTHER*** RECORD, SHATTERED!

WHAT CAN I SAY? SOME THINGS JUST COME NATURALLY TO ME.

REGGIE, THAT WAS ***INCREDIBLE!***

SURE WAS. THANKS, MIDGE.

SAY, YOU THINK THERE WERE COLLEGE SCOUTS IN THE STANDS, TONIGHT?

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, BUT YOUR ***BIGGEST FAN*** SURE WAS! I SAW THE WHOLE THING, DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT MY PHONE, ONCE!

OKAY, MAYBE ONCE, BUT IT WAS DURING HALFTIME!

AW, SHUCKS, RONNIE.

HEY, WHERE'S ARCHIE? TOO GOOD TO COME WATCH BETTY CHEER?

HE WAS HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE, BUT THEN HE SAID HE HAD TO LEAVE.

IT WAS PRETTY ABRUPT.

THAT'S ARCHIE ANDREWS FOR YA. ALWAYS ON TO THE NEXT THING.

I'M...I'M SURE HE HAD HIS REASONS.

THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION!

HOW ABOUT A ROUND AT POP'S? MY TREAT!

YOU GIRLS GO AHEAD. I'VE GOT SOME GOOD NEWS TO TELL THE OLD MAN!

SWEET REPRIEVE.

It's incredible what confidence can bring. What's even more incredible is how the adoration of one's peers...

...amounts to absolutely nothing, when something else is lacking.

DAD! WE DID IT! *WE WON!*

AND THE THIEVES GOT AWAY WITH *HOW* MUCH?

THEY DIDN'T GET AWAY *AT ALL?* AMAZING!

WERE YOU ABLE TO GET A COMMENT FROM *MR. JUSTICE* AT THE CRIME SCENE?

DAD...WE WON ALL-COUNTY... I SCORED THE WINNING TOUCHDOWN...

COACH KLEATS SAID THAT--

HOLD ON A SECOND, JONES... I GOTTA DEAL WITH SOME-THING.

YES?

I... WE...WE WON.

COACH SAID I'VE BROKEN RIVERDALE'S RECORD FOR YARDAGE.

Oh, THAT'S... THAT'S *GREAT*, SON.

YEAH, JONES, I'M STILL HERE.

SEEMED LIKE KIND OF A BIG DEAL.

I DUNNO... MAYBE YOU COULD WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT IT IN THE *GAZETTE?*

WE'LL HAVE TO SEE. THERE MAY BE ROOM FOR A COLUMN IN THE SPORTS SECTION.

NO, JUGHEAD! I'M NOT TALKING TO YOU! THIS IS *FRONT PAGE* STUFF *YOU'RE* TALKING ABOUT!

I WANT A FULL STORY ON THE FOILED ROBBERY ON MY DESK, FIRST THING IN THE MORNING!

I SWEAR, THIS *"MR. JUSTICE"* IS THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO THIS PAPER!

AND THEY SAY PRINT IS DEAD!

"WE'LL HAVE TO SEE," HE SAYS. WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP! YOU'D THINK HE COULD HAVE AT LEAST MANAGED AN "I'M PROUD OF YOU, REG!"

REGGIE, COULD YOU SLOW DOWN, PLEASE?

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU SPIT NAILS!

I MEAN, EVER SINCE THIS "MR. JUSTICE" GUY SHOWED UP, IT'S ALL HE CAN TALK ABOUT!

REGGIE, PLEASE WATCH THE ROAD!

IT'S FINE, BABE, I'M IN CONTRO--

LOOK OUT!

HOLY--!

SCREEE

SMASH

AIIEEEEE!!

RONNIE! HOLD ON!

WE GOTTA GET OUT! THE FRONT HALF... WE'RE TOO HEAVY!

I...I CAN'T! I'M STUCK!

REGGIE, HELP ME!

VERONICA! NO!

RRRNNNNKK

SKRSSSH

Oh, GOD... VERONICA...

SOME-BODY LOSE A CAR?

WHAT... WHAT THE--

YOU'RE HIM! YOU'RE MR. JUSTICE!

THAT'S ME. YOU ALL RIGHT, MISS?

I'M...I'M FINE.

I...I CAN'T... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

THANK YOU.

NO NEED TO THANK ME. BUT YOU SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO HER. AND COOL IT WITH THE ROAD RAGE, HUH?

Y-YEAH... SURE...

DON'T TAKE OUT YOUR ANGER ON SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T DESERVE IT.

That gratitude, however, would be short-lived...

RONNIE, AGAIN, I JUST CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YA' HOW SOR--

FORGET IT, REGGIE. YOU CAN JUST LET ME OUT HERE.

C'MON, RONNIE...

YOU WERE OUT OF CONTROL. I COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED! WE ***BOTH*** COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED.

WERE IT NOT FOR MR. JUSTICE...

Oh, SO ***HE'S*** WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?! I SAW YOU GIVING HIM THE EYES!

Oh, GIVE ME A BREAK, REGGIE.

WE'RE ***DONE***.

VERONICA... PLEASE...

WHAT DO I GOTTA DO TO CHANGE YOUR MIND?

THAT'S JUST IT, REGGIE...

YOU CAN'T ***MAKE*** SOMEONE LIKE YOU! I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED WHEN EVERYONE TOLD ME TO STAY AWAY FROM YOU. BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE ***DIFFERENT***.

EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, CUPCAKE?

I'M ***FINE***, DAD!

HRM...

NOW, HOLD ON A MINUTE, SON.

I'M SORRY, MR. LODGE... TELL VERONICA--

SHE'S ***WRONG***, YOU KNOW. YOU ***CAN*** MAKE PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

IT'S WHAT WE CALL ***MARKETING***.

YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL, MR. MANTLE.

YOU JUST GIVE ME A CALL WHENEVER YOU WANT TO FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF. JUST DON'T TELL VERONICA.

I... THANKS, MR. LODGE...

I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND.

REGGIE, YOU'RE HOME!

I HEARD THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT ON THE OVERLOOK! ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M FINE, DAD... VERONICA'S FINE...

MR. JUSTICE MADE SURE OF THAT.

MR. JUSTICE?

MR. JUSTICE WAS THERE?

OKAY... START FROM THE BEGINNING. TELL ME ***EXACTLY*** WHAT HAPPENED!

I'M GOING TO BED, DAD.

ALL RIGHT, WELL... FIRST THING IN THE MORNING! I WANNA HEAR ***ALL*** ABOUT IT!

Sometimes, no matter the progress, nor the promises we've made... All it takes is for someone to tell you you're special...

...for you to fall <u>right</u> back in with a bad crowd.

"I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME TO ME, MY BOY..."

HEY, I REMEMBER THIS THING... FROM THE MUSEUM.

AS WELL YOU SHOULD. IT WAS ***LODGE INDUSTRIES'*** FIRST EXPERIMENT IN RIVERDALE.

... AND IT'S WHAT GAVE ***MR. JUSTICE*** HIS POWERS.

WAIT A MINUTE...

SO MR. JUSTICE ***IS*** ARCHIE ANDREWS?!

AND THE REASON HE HAS THOSE POWERS IS BECAUSE I--

AS IF YOU DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW THAT. PERHAPS THEY SHOULD HAVE CALLED HIM "MR. ***POETIC*** JUSTICE."

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND... I GOT BLASTED WITH THE ***SAME*** QUANTUM STUFF THAT ARCHIE DID!

HOW COME ***I*** DIDN'T GET ANY OF THOSE POWERS?!

THAT WE'RE STILL NOT SURE OF. PERHAPS MR. ANDREWS WAS EXPOSED TO A MUCH ***HIGHER*** DEGREE. BUT I HAVE REASON TO SUSPECT THAT YOU STILL HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP SUCH TALENTS.

ALL YOU NEED IS A LITTLE ***CATALYST***.

WHAT IS THAT STUFF?

--AND I'M JUST LIKE MR. JUSTICE?

JUST A SPECIAL ***CONCOCTION*** MY LAB BOYS WHIPPED UP. WHATEVER QUANTUM ENERGY YOU STILL HAVE STORED IN YOUR DNA... THIS SHOULD BRING IT TO THE FORE.

SO YOU'RE SAYING... I ***DRINK*** THIS--

WELL, NOT ***JUST*** LIKE HIM. THE SERUM WILL ONLY STAY IN YOUR SYSTEM FOR A FEW DAYS.

LESS THAN THAT IF YOU OVERDO IT WITH THE HEROICS. AFTER THAT, YOU'LL NEED ***MORE***.

SO WHAT DO YOU SAY, REGINALD? FIRST ONE'S ***FREE***.

I SAY: "***BOTTOMS UP!***"

The next few days were a blur for everyone.

Superheroes and villains kept coming out of the woodwork.

And all of a sudden, Mr. Justice didn't seem so special anymore. Even Jughead lost the beat on the hero's exploits.

But it wasn't enough.

Riverdale Gazette

"Kid Wicked" needed to grab the headlines.

HOW'S ***THIS*** FOR A FRONT-PAGER, DAD?!

REGGIE! ***YOU'RE*** KID WICKED?! WHAT--WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!

LET'S GO HAVE A FATHER-SON TALK, SHALL WE?

PRETTY HIGH UP, AIN'T WE?

REGGIE... P-P-PLEASE--

THINK I CAN BREAK MY YARDAGE RECORD, NOW?!

"MANTLE CROSSES THE 20-YARD LINE...THIRTY... FORTY...

"...HE COULD GO ALL THE WAY, FOLKS!"

AAAHHH!!

"AND...INTERCEPTED." WHY DON'T YOU LEARN TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, ANDREWS? MAD THAT I KNOW YOUR "BIG SECRET"?

KID WI-- ***REGGIE-- STOP THIS!*** I KNOW HIRAM LODGE DID SOMETHING TO YOU...

...BUT YOU'RE GOING TO GET SOMEONE HURT! YOU COULD HAVE EVEN KILLED YOUR ***OWN FATHER!***

THIS ***ISN'T*** YOU!

Oh, STOP WITH THE MORALIZING!

IT WAS JUST A HARMLESS PRANK!

...LIKE THE ONE YOU AND FANGS PLAYED ON ME AT THE MUSEUM?

YOU "***FORGAVE***" ME?!

I FORGAVE YOU FOR THAT, AND I CAN FORGIVE YOU FOR THIS, BUT PLEASE JUST STOP...

Riverdale became a warzone that day. Two titans duking it out in the skies above.

IF NOT FOR ***ME***, YOU WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE, ***"MR. JUSTICE"!***

YOU SHOULD BE THANKING ME!

REGGIE, *PLEASE!* I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU! RIVERDALE WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT!

Even with the Lodge Serum, Mr. Justice was more than a match for Kid Wicked...

...and the serum's effects were quickly fading.

And every burst of energy only shortened its shelf life.

GET OFFA ME!

THOOM

URGHK... YOU'RE *TOUGH*, ANDREWS. I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.

...GOTTA TOP OFF...

REGGIE, *DON'T!*

YOU *CAN'T* TAKE IT!

It's weird how memory works.

Or doesn't work.

THUMP

NO! MY SERUM!

THROK

NO...

At the time, all I could think was 'Who was <u>he</u> to tell me what I can and can't <u>do</u>?!'

YOU JUST CAN'T LET ME HAVE ANYTHING, CAN YOU?

REGGIE...

MY POWERS, MY GIRLFRIEND, HELL, EVEN MY OWN FATHER...

REGGIE, LET ME EXPLAIN...

WHY DO YOU TAKE EVERYTHING FROM ME?!

SLAM!

HOLY--

IS THAT... REGGIE?!

Oh, NO...MY FATHER MUST HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS...

Oh, MY GOD! HE'S GONNA KILL HIM!

Every punch was like a freight train. A decade of resentment, envy, and self-loathing made manifest in a super-powered fit of rage.

The violent tantrum of a wicked kid.

REGGIE, PLEASE!

STOP IT!

REGGIE... YOUR HEART...

Every strike drained what little power I had left.

Like flooring the gas when you're running on empty.

Oh, GIMME A BREAK, ANDREWS...

YOU'RE PATHETIC.

YOU'RE NOT EVEN FIGHTING BACK!

NNGGH...

It didn't matter. I was blinded by arrogance. I just needed Archie Andrews to hurt.

The way I had been hurting for so long.

AAGH!

Suddenly it happened. And with a searing flash of white hot pain, an even more agonizing lucidity.

W-WHATS' HAPPENING TO ME...?

WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

REGGIE...

I COULD...=KOFF=... I COULD HEAR... YOUR HEART...

IT'S... ARRHYTHMIC.

TH-THE *SERUM.*

Shh... Shhh. HEY, ARCH, BUDDY. TRY NOT TO TALK.

I TOLD YOU TO WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF, PAL

IT'S... =NFF= KILLING YOU.

I COULDN'T LET YOU...

HURT YOURSELF...

REGGIE...

And with just one blow, it was all over.

But it came at a cost.

ARCHIE? C'MON, PAL... SAY SOMETHIN'.

S-STOP. STOP JOKIN' ME, MAN.

PLEASE SAY SOMETHING!

ARCHIE!!

MR. JUSTICE... ARCHIE ANDREWS... WAS THE ONLY ***REAL*** FRIEND I'D EVER HAD.

IT WAS NEVER ABOUT THE BLAST. IT WASN'T THE QUANTUM ENERGY BESTOWING POWERS ONTO HIM.

ARCHIE WAS ALWAYS, AT HIS HEART, A PERSON WHO LIVED AND LOVED SELFLESSLY.

HE WAS ALWAYS THE ***BETTER MAN.***

MR. MANTLE...

I JUST COULDN'T ADMIT IT.

SINCE YOUR CONVICTION, YOU HAVE PROVEN TO BE A MODEL INMATE, AND HAVE EVEN VOLUNTEERED IN THE PRISON INFIRMARY.

AND THERE SEEMS TO BE NO INDICATION THAT THE POWERS OF THIS "KID WICKED" HAVE ANY POSSIBILITY OF RESURGING.

=SNIFFLE=... INDEED. *Ahem*... PARDON ME.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOUR REASONS AS TO WHY YOU BELIEVE YOU SHOULD BE GRANTED PAROLE--

I DON'T.

=gasp!=

I BEG YOUR PARDON?

I ***DON'T*** BELIEVE I SHOULD BE RELEASED.

I STILL HAVE A LOT OF DEBT TO PAY OFF. TO RIVERDALE... TO SOCIETY... TO ARCHIE ANDREWS.

...AND TO MY ***FATHER.***

YOU'RE THE FINAL PIECE TO THIS PUZZLE, MR. MANTLE!

I DON'T KNOW, HARPER...

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I'M NOT EVEN SURE I HAVE A SON ANYMORE.

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS MR. JUSTICE PERIODICAL FOR MONTHS NOW. AND IF THERE'S ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE...

BEYOND ALL OF THE CRIME-FIGHTING, GIANT ROBOTS, SUPERHERO STUFF...

MR. JUSTICE--***ARCHIE***--JUST WANTED TO BRING RIVERDALE TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY. AND A COMMUNITY STARTS AT HOME.

PERHAPS...

"...IT'S NOT TOO LATE."

RIVERDALE PENITENTIARY

I'M GLAD YOU CAME... THERE'S A LOT I'VE BEEN MEANING TO SAY.

MAINLY... "I'M SORRY."

I'M SORRY FOR BREAKING MY PROMISE.

THE PAIN I CAUSED... BECAUSE I LET *OTHER* PEOPLE TELL ME WHAT TO DO.

"WHEN, INSTEAD, I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO MY *HEART*."

"AND IT WAS MR. JUSTICE WHO REMINDED ME OF THAT".

REGGIE...

THERE ARE THINGS I SHOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY, TOO.

TO ERR IS HUMAN.

BUT FORGIVENESS... EVEN FORGIVING *YOURSELF*...

IS *SUPER* HUMAN.

DO...DO YOU THINK *HE* WOULD HAVE WANTED IT THIS WAY?

"SON... THERE'S NO DOUBT IN MY MIND."

END

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE™

COVER GALLERY

REIKO MURAKAMI

WILFREDO TORRES
WITH MATT HERMS

MATT TALBOT

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE™ WRATH OF REGGIE

A "behind the scenes" look at Archie is Mr. Justice #4

And so, the saga of Mr. Justice comes to an end.

…or does it?

Who can really say what the future holds? But so long as there is still good left in this world, and people who have the desire to make right what's gone wrong, Mr. Justice lives on.

This issue was heavy, to say the very least. It's not often we get the villain's side of the story, but we felt it was important to showcase all the significant players in Archie's life, and that of course meant including Reggie. The reveal that Reggie was effectively the cause of Archie developing powers was a stroke of genius on writer Blake Howard's part, and gave us an additional layer of complexity. It also poses an important question—was Reggie really a villain, or just a product of his environment?

This isn't Blake Howard's first rodeo in Riverdale. He contributed a haunting story to the 2023 *Camp Pickens* anthology and from that we knew he had the chops to tell a story with depth, emotion, and just the right amount of horror to really get in there and examine the psyche of someone as deeply troubled as Reggie Mantle. It's no small feat to handle the concluding issue of an epic saga like this, but Blake handled it with poise and excellence.

We're always happy when we get the opportunity to work with artist Federico Sabbatini. Much like Howard, Federico is a bit more familiar with the scarier side of Archie—contributing to a number of our horror anthologies, including *Weirder Mysteries* and *Pop's Chock'lit Shoppe of Horrors* I and II. That meant that he also was capable of taking our beloved characters and dropping them into heavier situations, something he demonstrated here with agility. Federico's touch is unique and recognizable, and was a perfect fit for a story that relied on equal parts action and expression. He and Blake really gave us a special gift with this final issue.

Page 9 layout by Federico Sabbatini.

Page 16 layout and final inks by Federico Sabbatini.

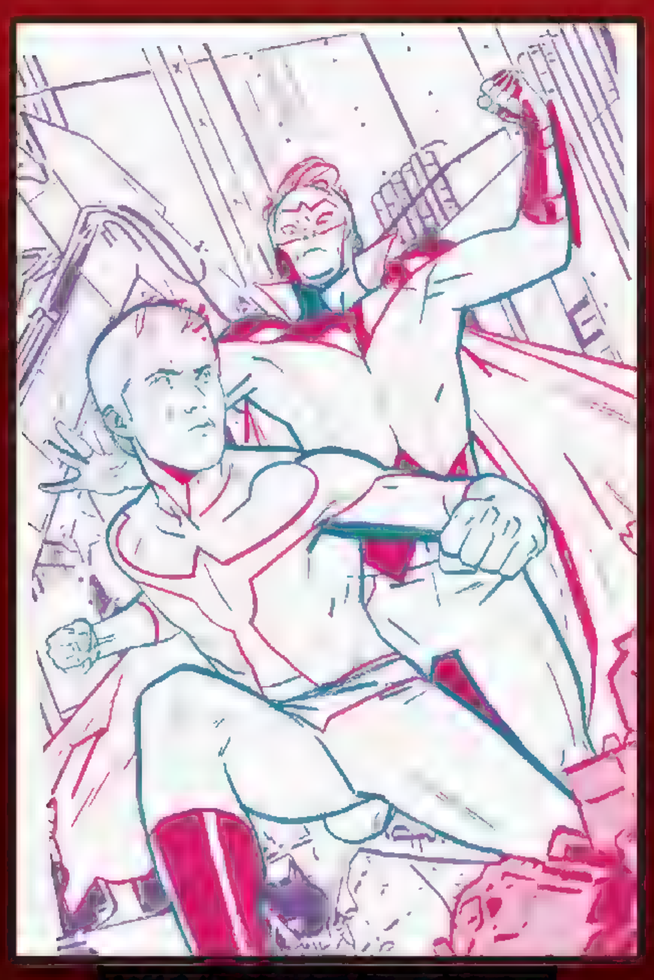
As usual, Glenn Whitmore's colors and Jack Morelli's letters were the whipped cream and cherries on top of this justice-flavored ice cream sundae. Life is just sweeter because of them!

All that plus three more gorgeous covers, this time from Reiko Murakami, Wilfredo Torres with Matt Herms, and another fantastic homage from Matt Talbot, this time paying tribute to the iconic *Batman: The Killing Joke* cover!

And now, for something completely different: join us in July for one of the biggest comic book/pop culture crossovers we've ever done—*Archie Meets Jay and Silent Bob*, written by Kevin Smith himself! This is a double-sized, collector's item for mature audiences that probably wasn't on your 2025 bingo card, but we promise it's packed with fun, hilarity, and the trademark Kevin Smith humor and style you know and love. Don't miss it!

Jamie L. Rotante,
Editor

Main cover concept by Reiko Murakami.



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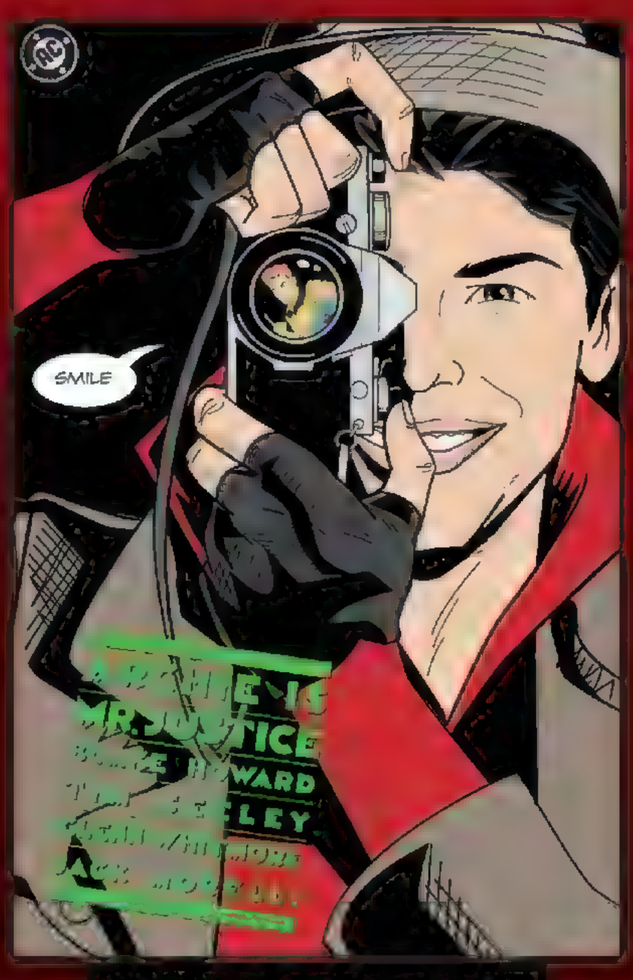
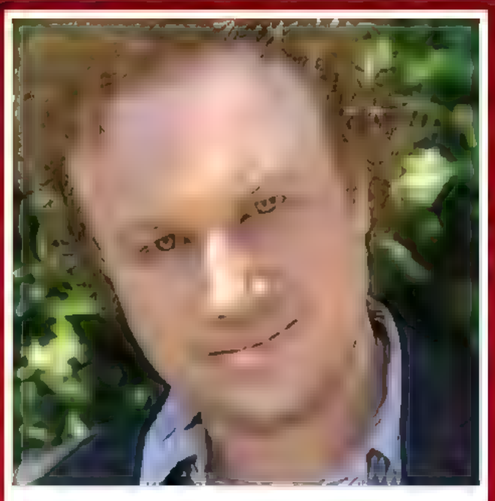


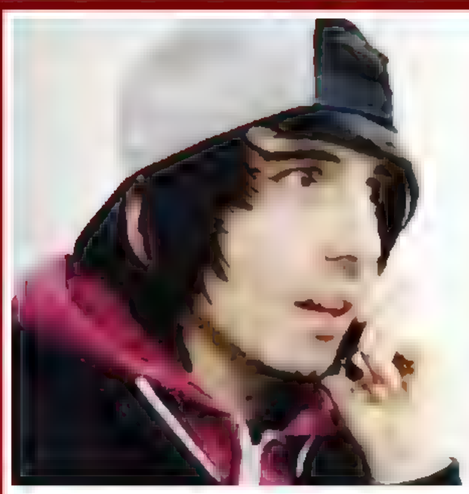
Homage variant cover concept by Matt Talbot.

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE TEAM UP!

An interview with the writer and the artist of Archie is Mr. Justice #4—Blake Howard and Federico Sabbatini



Blake Howard



Federico Sabbatini

ARCHIE COMICS: What has it been like to explore Reggie's backstory and conclude this epic miniseries?

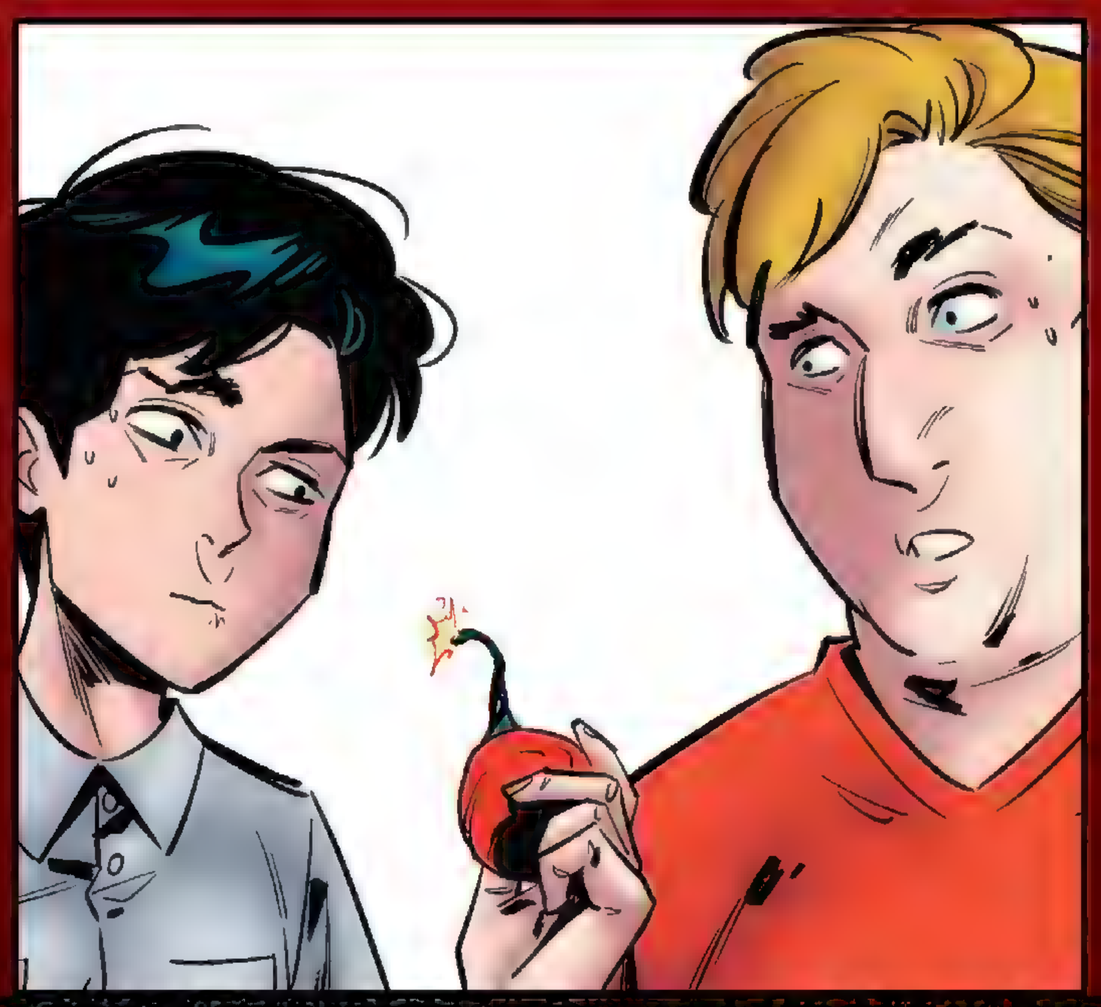
BLAKE HOWARD: One of my favorite aspects of the superhero genre is the super villain, especially the "villain origin story." What makes them do what they do? Do they believe themselves to be the hero? With Mr. Justice #4, I really wanted to give Kid Wicked some depth and detail and answer some of those questions.

FEDERICO SABBATINI: Reggie's story was really exciting from beginning to end, I like the conflict that is created with the various characters around him that lead him to make important decisions in his life. it gives some depth to the character and the conclusion is a quality touch! I renew my compliments to Blake who did a great job.

AC: What's your favorite part of working on an Archie comic?

BH: What I love about working on Archie is the ability to really plant two feet into "genre fiction" and just have fun with the idyllic nature of Riverdale. There's no need for cynicism, deconstruction, or satire—Archie wears his heart on his sleeve!

FS: I generally love drawing action scenes, I try to put as much dynamism into them as possible to keep the reader entertained. But in Archie Comics stories like this, I like a lot to have the characters interact with each other as in the case of Reggie with Veronica. I hope I was able to best render their expressions and have communicated to the reader what the characters are feeling.



Reggie has never played "hot potato" before.

AC: What's your favorite Archie memory?

BH: Getting asked to write for the *Camp Pickens* special, and having an opportunity to plant my flag on my own little corner of the Archie-verse! Getting to meet fans who have been fond of these characters for decades and to share in their passion is truly a unique experience!

FS: Since I was a kid, I grew up watching the Sabrina TV series, as later discovered as being part of the Archie universe. On the comic book level definitely the horror comics by Francesco Francavilla and the relaunch a few years ago of the main *Archie* title. After that, I also caught up with the *Jughead* issues written by Chip Zdarsky. I love the world that revolves around Archie!

ARCHIE IS MR. JUSTICE ISSUE FOUR PLAYLIST

— SELECTED BY JAMIE LEE ROTANTE, — VINCENT LOVALLO, & BLAKE HOWARD

1. "We Used to Be Friends"
The Dandy Warhols

2. "Hey Jealousy"
Gin Blossoms

3. "Piggy (Nothing Can Stop Me Now"
Nine Inch Nails

4. "Evildoer"
Suicide Commando

5. "I Don't Wanna Be Me"
Type O Negative

6. "Darkside"
Desire

7. "No Reason"
Sum 41

8. "Poison Heart"
Ramones

9. "And the Hero Will Drown"
Story of the Year

10. "Untitled (How Could This Happen To Me?)"
Simple Plan

— LISTEN ON SPOTIFY —
https://tinyurl.com/ArchieMJ4

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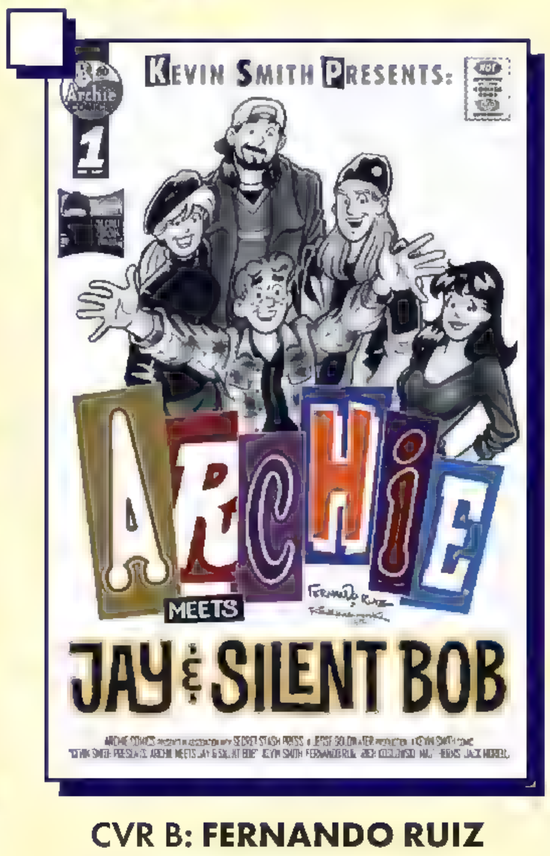
JULY 9, 2025

Archie COMICS

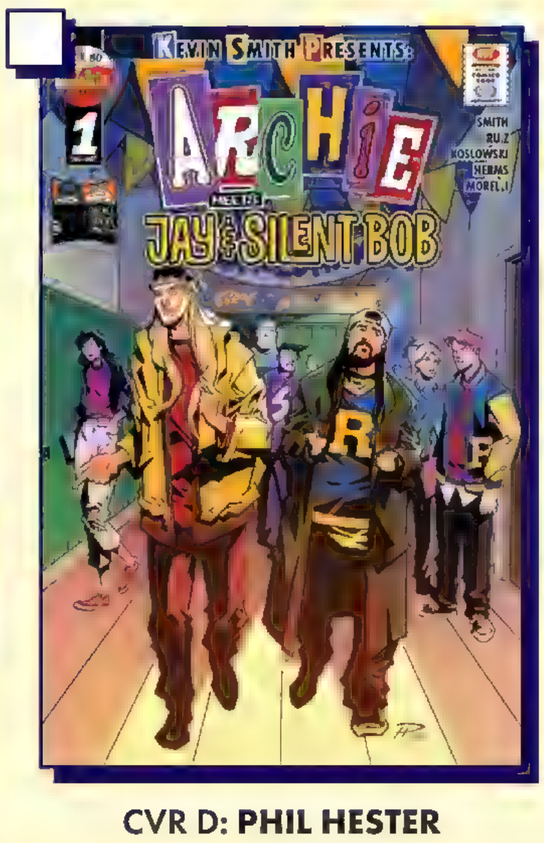
COVER CHECKLIST

CVR A: **FERNANDO RUIZ**



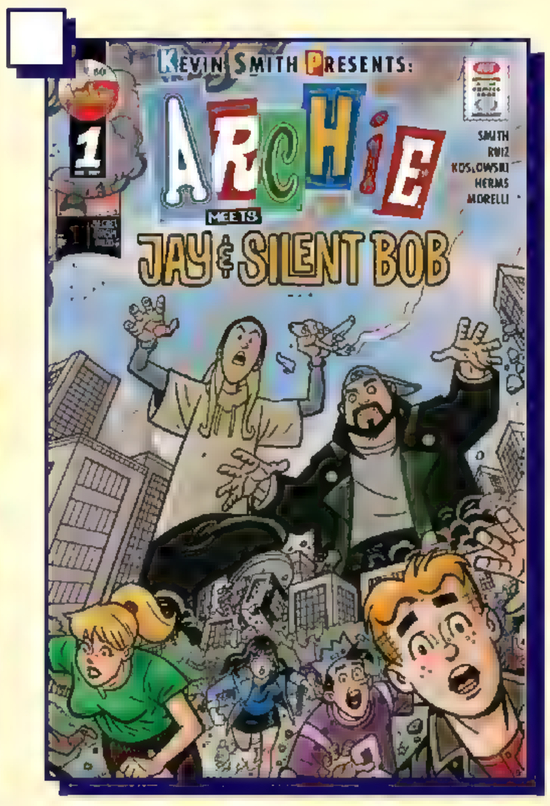
CVR B: **FERNANDO RUIZ**

CVR C: **FRANCESCO FRANCAVILLA**



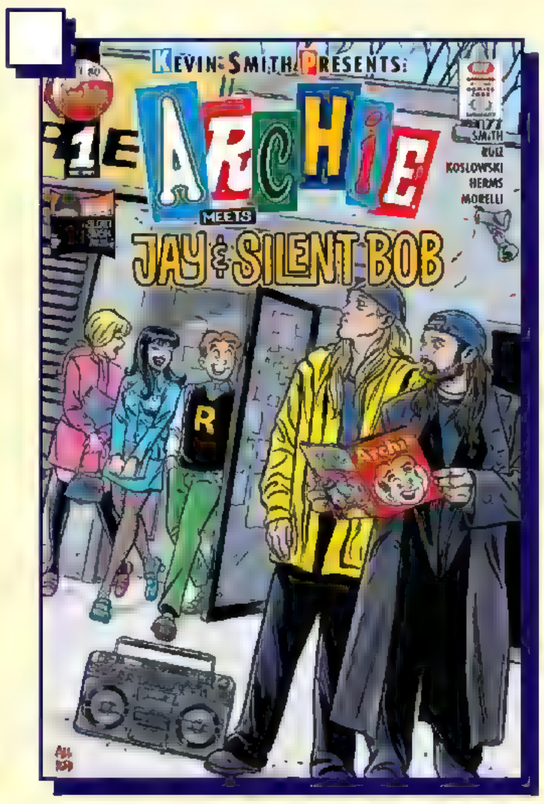
CVR D: **PHIL HESTER**

CVR E: **DAN PARENT**



CVR F: **TY TEMPLETON**

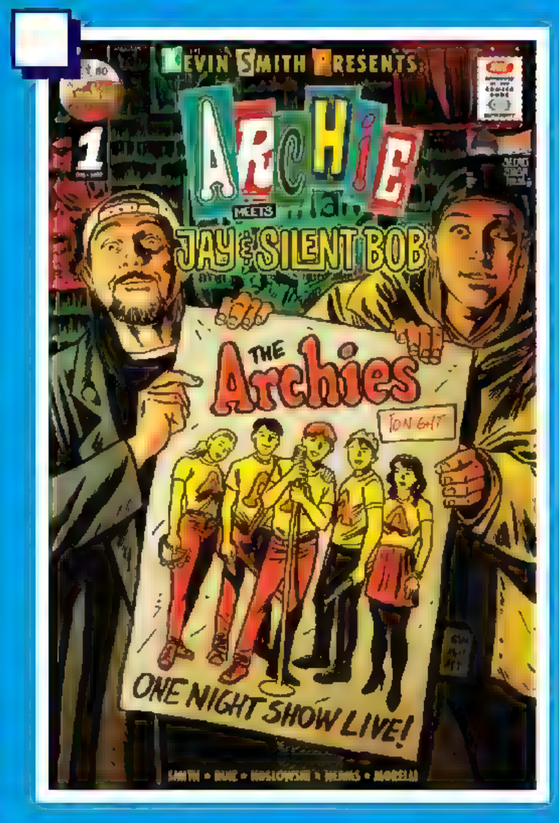
CVR G - RI: **DAN PANOSIAN**



CVR H - RI: **MICHAEL ALLRED**

FOIL VARIANTS!

CVR I - **FOIL (RUIZ A)**



CVR J - **FOIL (FRANCAVILLA)**

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WEBSTORE CVR - **FERNANDO RUIZ**

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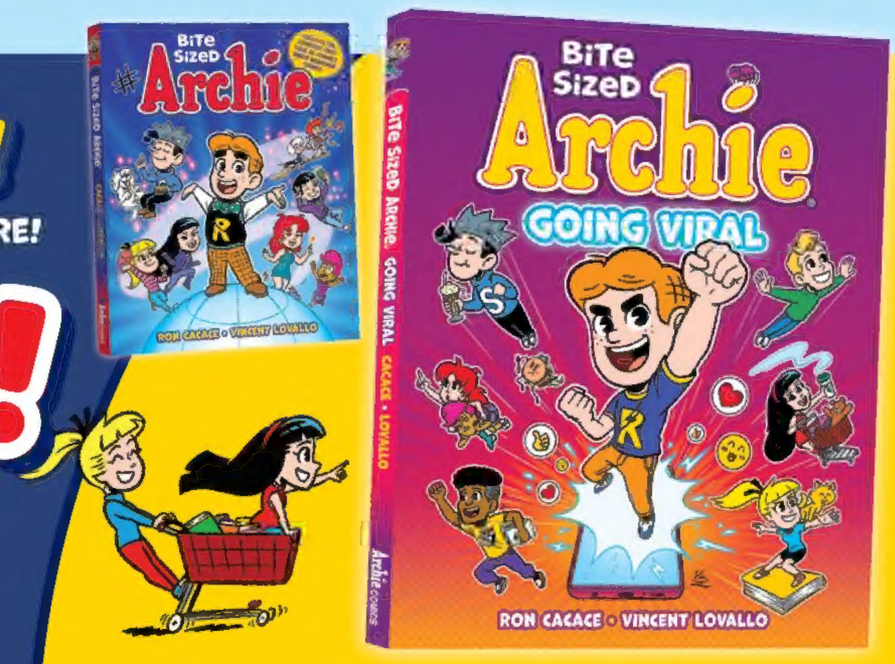

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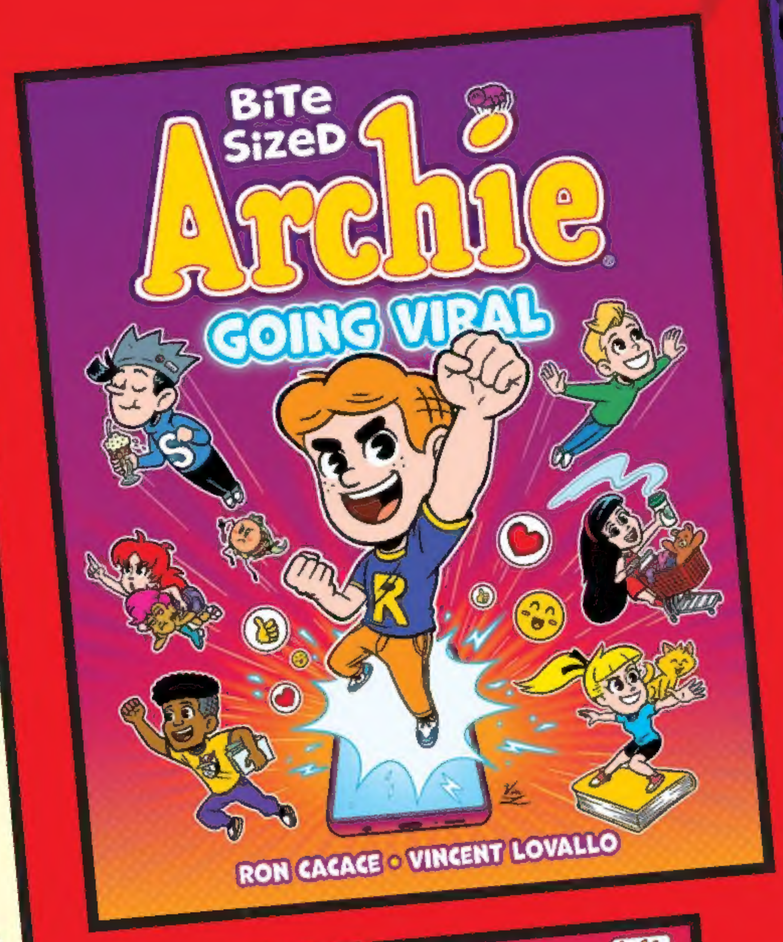

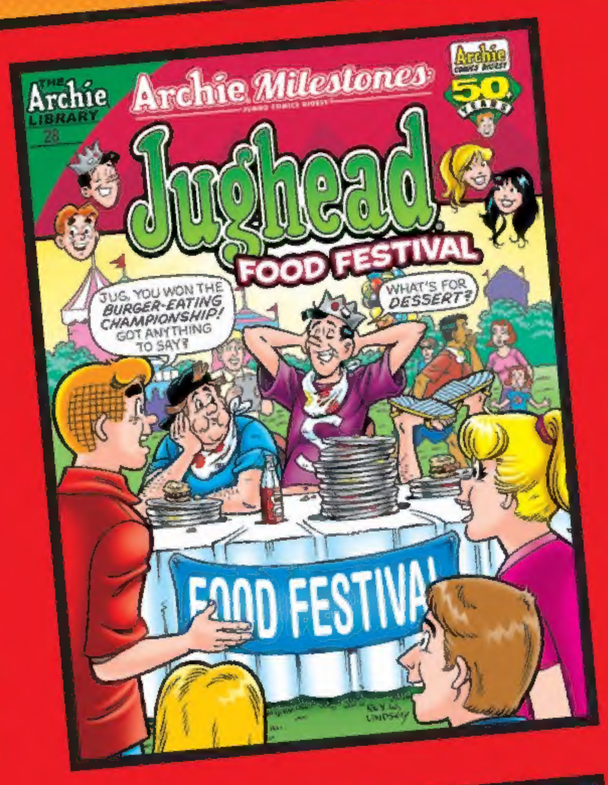

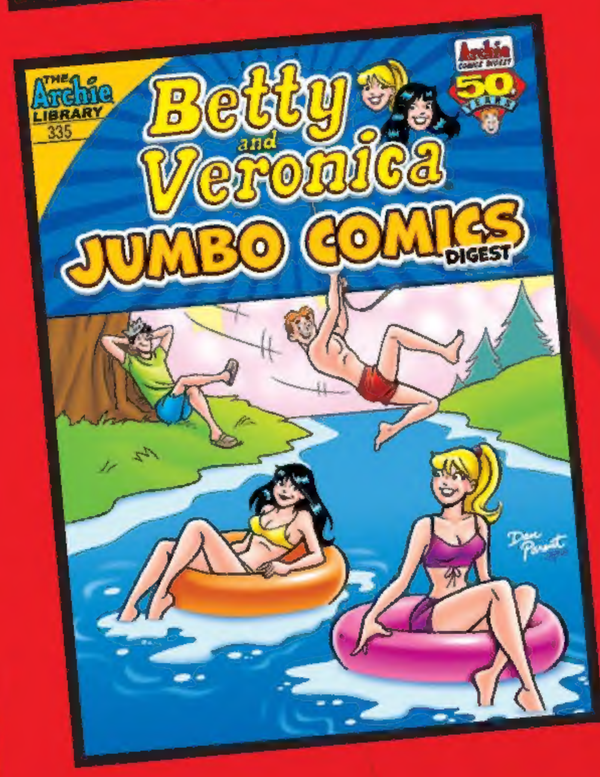

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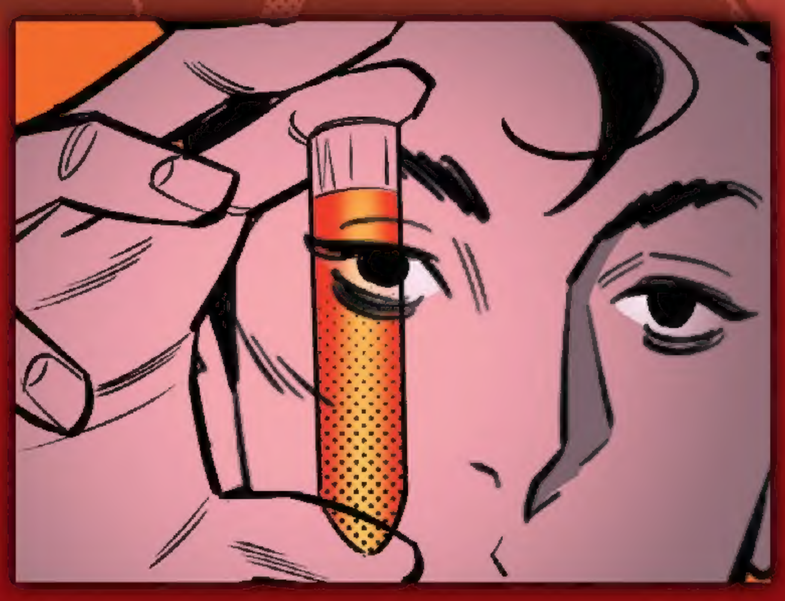

FEATURING THE TALENTS OF BLAKE HOWARD, FEDERICO SABBATINI, GLENN WHITMORE, & JACK MORELLI

Archie PREMIUM EVENT

#ArchieIsMrJustice

TEEN +

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